

THE STATUS REPORT

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MCSW COMMITS TO MAKING WOMEN'S WAGE EQUALITY A PRIORITY

Despite federal and state laws outlawing it, gender wage inequity persists, negatively impacting women's ability to become economically self sufficient, take care of their families, plan for retirement, invest for the future, etc. The extent of the problem remains shrouded in secrecy as people are uncomfortable, or even forbidden, to discuss their earnings. This has resulted in some people believing that with the strides that women have made, the problem has ceased to exist.

Economist & former Massachusetts Lt. Governor Evelyn Murphy's book, *Getting Even: Why Women Don't Get Paid Like Men and What to Do About It!*, has put the issue squarely back in the forefront where it belongs. This year, the MCSW has committed to helping advance Massachusetts women to wage equality. The priority directly relates to the Commission's mission of helping to advance women to full equality in all areas of life.

The Commission has fashioned a multi-faceted approach to its work in this area. It is working closely with Senator Harriette Chandler and Representative Alice Wolf to fashion legislation, based on a Minnesota model that will address pay equity in the public sector - beginning with state government.

The Commission is also convening statewide groups and organizations that are working on pay equity and related issues to form the MA Coalition for Women's Wage Equality. The Coalition will amplify the work of individual organizations, integrate efforts and promote collaboration, advocate for the passage of pay equity legislation and create a comprehensive strategy to move women to pay equity in the Commonwealth. (See related article)

In conjunction with the Coalition and the Caucus of Women Legislators, the Commission will be holding statewide public hearings to gather personal testimony of real experiences with wage inequity. This information will be forwarded to lawmakers to provide credibility and bolster the legislation.

We know, from the state of Minnesota (where women working in the public sector make 97 cents for every dollar that their male counterparts earn since the 1980s!), that progress can be achieved. It won't be quick, and there will be costs associated. But it is a battle that can, and must, be fought and won.

If not us, who? If not now, when?

HOW THE WAGE GAP AFFECTS WOMEN

- There is an unexplainable wage gap of 23 cents between what men and women make
- Women who work full time and year round made 77% of men's earnings in 2005.
- A female high school graduate loses \$700,000 in her lifetime.
- A female college graduate loses \$1.2 million, and a professional school graduate loses \$2 million.
- The wage gap has been stalled for more then a decade.
- Each time a woman is turned down for a job based on her gender, she loses that time earning money.
- Pregnancy plays a factor in wage inequity
 - Many women are laid off during their pregnancy and when they return are refused a job or given a lower paying position then before they left.
 - Most managers believe new mothers prefer to spend more time at home taking care of their children. Mothers are also seen as unreliable.
 - New fathers usually get raises when they have a child because they now have a growing family to support while women are paid less for the exact same reason

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Executive Director Corner

It whispers, so listen.....

This is the call to action around ovarian cancer, the fifth leading cause of cancer death among U.S. women. Had I not listened to my own whispers in 2001, I would not have celebrated five years of ovarian cancer survivorship this July.

September is National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month and I am committed to doing what I can to raise awareness of the disease and encourage women to listen to their bodies and act on what they hear.

I consider myself exceedingly fortunate. Mine was caught early and with surgery, chemotherapy and radiation, I have been in remission since. The American Cancer Society estimates this year 20,180 women will be diagnosed with this cancer in the U.S. and about 15,310 women will die from it.

Ovarian cancer is an insidious disease as it often strikes without warning and without cause. There is currently no effective means of early detection. The symptoms of ovarian cancer are subtle and hard to pinpoint because they often mimic more prevalent digestive and gastrointestinal disorders. Common symptoms include vague but persistent and unexplained swelling, bloating, pressure or pain in the abdomen, frequent urination in the absence of an infection, unexplained weight gain or loss, unusual fatigue or abnormal vaginal bleeding. As a result, ovarian cancer is usually diagnosed in advanced stages and only 50% of women survive longer than five years. However, if ovarian cancer is detected and treated early, the five-year survival rate is greater than 90%.

I do not share this information to scare. Instead, I hope those of you reading this will be a bit better informed and determined to not ignore symptoms. In today's hectic world it is far too easy for busy women, who are much better at taking care of others, to choose to ignore a few minor pains or irregularities. We tell ourselves it's nothing; this too shall pass, etc. DON'T DO IT. Paying attention and acting on what you know is abnormal can save your life.

According to a new national survey sponsored by the National Ovarian Cancer Coalition, only 15 percent of women are familiar with the symptoms of ovarian cancer and 82 percent have never talked to their doctors about the symptoms and risk factors. Speak to your gynecologist for more information and have an examination.

Receiving a cancer diagnosis of any kind is an incomparable life altering experience. Coming face to face with one's mortality is not easy, but it can yield unexpected positive results. You realize your inner strength and your ability to face and deal with whatever you have to. You get the opportunity to examine your priorities and your goals and amend if necessary. In my case, my surgical onset menopause hot flashes have saved me tons of money on my heating bill and purchasing sweaters. But best of all, you get the opportunity to give back and to try to help others who are dealing with the same things you have experienced.

Ovarian cancer whispers.....please listen.



In Memoriam: Cancer Claims Former Texas Governor Ann Richards



Ann Richards' official portrait as Governor of Texas

Ann Richards, the larger-than-life former governor of Texas, passed away from esophageal cancer last week. A pioneer in women's political leadership, Richards gained national visibility for her tell-it-like-it-is personality and her support of women and minorities.

Richards was a model of how a woman could live a political life. From an early age she volunteered on campaigns, and in the 1960s she joined together with a group of women to form North Dallas Democratic Women. In 1976, she decided to seek office herself, and became a county commissioner in Texas. She continued to climb the political pipeline throughout the next decade and a half, winning the governor's seat of Texas in 1990. During her governorship, she appointed more women and minorities to state posts than any of her predecessors. As the Texas state treasurer, she first came to national attention when she delivered the keynote address at the 1988 Democratic National Convention when she stated "Poor George (W. Bush), he can't help it. He was born with a silver foot in his mouth." She also stated, "Ginger Rogers did everything Fred Astaire did, only backwards and in high heels."

She will be remembered for her outstanding leadership, feisty humor, and most of all, the way she opened doors for other women to run and lead. Those of you who attended the December 2006 Massachusetts Conference for Women were fortunate enough to hear Governor Richards address the more than 3,000 attendees as keynote speaker. She has secured her place in history and is an inspiration to us all.

MCSW to Launch Massachusetts Women's Resource & Referral Network

One of the responsibilities of the MCSW is to serve as a clearinghouse for information on issues pertaining to women. While the MCSW has always endeavored to successfully fulfill that responsibility, on October 12, the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women will take a giant step forward in enhancing its ability to provide Massachusetts Women with the information and resources they need by launching its MA Women's Resource & Referral Network (MWRRN), an interactive, online service. The MWRRN will be launched during will a press conference at the Massachusetts State House's Grand Staircase on October 12th at 11 a.m.

The Resource & Referral Network - www.mcswnetwork.com - will allow users to search for services or resources they need by geographic region and/or service or topic area either from their home computers, or in the case of those without computers, at public libraries, colleges, community centers, etc.

"Our goal with this project is to ultimately create a 'one-stop-shopping' experience for the women of Massachusetts - a place where they can go to reliably get the information and referrals they need for themselves and their families," explained MCSW Executive Director Linda Brantley. "We want to make sure that women from Cape Cod to the Berkshires have the information they need readily available to them in a user-friendly manner." We continuously get calls from women across the Commonwealth looking for all types of information - how to get free legal advice, how to address domestic violence issues, where to turn to find job training services, where to access preventative health care services. By working with all those agencies who can address these issues we hope to build a resource that will be invaluable to the women of Massachusetts," Brantley added.

The MCSW seeks to include local, community, regional, statewide and in some cases federal resources and providers. "If you can envision a woman going to our Web site, seeing a map of Massachusetts, clicking on where she lives or a radius of say 25 miles and entering the type of information she seeks - say legal resources, and up pops a list of everything that is available to her - that is what we are trying to create," stated MCSW Program Manager Paula Daddona, who is coordinating the project.

This service is in large part being made possible by the generosity of corporate sponsors such as Verizon, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts, Tufts Health Plan, AstraZeneca, Waterhouse Coopers, SBLI and many others who have contributed through the MCSW's annual fundraising activity, the Unsung Heroines Award Luncheon. The MWRRN will be continuously augmented and improved over time. After the initial launch, the MCSW will investigate and pursue ways to make this valuable resource available in different languages and to those women who may not have access to or be computer proficient.

Organizations and groups wishing to be included in the network may go to the site and register their organization by entering contact information. Letters, including user names and passwords, were mailed to all those organizations that are already in the network. They will be able to log in to the network to update their information as needed.

Questions and requests for additional information should be addressed to Ms. Daddona at 617-626-6521.

"Wage Equality" Continued from Page 1

Minnesota began the process of achieving pay equity for state and city employees in Minnesota in 1976. The Commission on the Economic Status of Women, after hosting public hearings, speculated that the state's equal pay of equal work law had been violated. The Commission asked for a study of job classes and compensation. Hay was contracted to conduct the study which found pay inequities. To address the problem pay equity legislation for state employees was filed and in 1982 the legislature passed the State Government Pay Equity Act. Inequities in local government were addressed second; in 1984 the legislature enacted the Local Government Pay Equity Act for cities, counties, school districts and other local government units.

The MCSW is proud to put forth its plan to address pay inequity in Massachusetts. We welcome you to join with us in the process. Murphy offers other recommendations:

- Document experiences of discrimination no matter how small or unimportant they may seem
- Build a grassroots campaign that will continue to pressure policy makers and political figures
- Women must act through uniting and forming coalitions that work for change
- Pressure must come from three angles (the "pressure triangle"): below (employees), outside (the public), and above (CEO's). These three unstoppable forces will make it impossible for policy makers to ignore the issue.

"When women are paid like men, we will become socially equal as well....By chipping away at one deeply embedded form of discrimination, you will also be tearing down bigotry and bias based on race, religion, sexual orientation, age, and physical ability. You will be doing your part to transform America into a society of people who genuinely value and respect one another."

Evelyn Murphy

Commission Corner

MCSW Elects New Officers & Approves 2007 Plan

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women elected four new officers at its September full commission meeting. Elizabeth Houlihan of Falmouth will serve as Chair, Marianne Fleckner of Westford will serve as Vice-Chair, Greer Swiston of Newton will serve as Treasurer and Susana Segat of Cambridge will serve as Secretary.

The Commission also approved its FY 2007 annual plan, which includes the following areas of focus: advancing Massachusetts women to full equality; increasing the number of women holding elected/appointed office or other leadership positions; helping to create legislation and public policy that will positively impact women's lives; increase statewide outreach to better understand and be positioned to advocate for all MA women; informing and educating law and policy makers, advocates, etc. about what MA women need; ensuring availability of MA gender disaggregated data; and serving as a resource for the women and families of MA,

Supreme Court Chief Justice Margaret Marshall Featured Speaker at BWT Dinner

Margaret H. Marshall, Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, was the featured speaker at the recent Bringing Women to the Table, a series of dinners among Massachusetts leading women.

Approximately 60 women from the law, the legislature, the MCSW, business, and nonprofit leadership gathered at the University of Massachusetts Club to hear Chief Justice Marshall share her "ten secrets of success", illustrated by tales of her life experiences. She encouraged women to follow their passion, believe in themselves, set priorities, value their families and when speaking, always do so before dinner!

Bringing Women to the Table is a joint initiative of the MCSW and the Caucus of Women Legislators which strives to create dialogue between women leaders from many different professions and areas of expertise to build consensus, enhance collaboration and integration of efforts, and leverage the collective power of their voices to effect positive change.

The dinner was also supported by the Donahue Institute at UMASS Boston and the National Association of Women Judges, District One. Justice Nan Duffly, NAWJ Chair, noted, "We celebrate the close and lasting ties we have formed with the women of the legislature, state government and all who advocate on behalf of gender equality, in our shared belief that an independent judiciary will promote fairness and equality in our system of justice." Justice Duffly noted that NAWJ has implemented the BWT model on the national level to the great satisfaction of the participants.

MCSW Convenes Massachusetts Coalition for Women's Wage Equality

The MCSW hosted the first meeting of the Massachusetts Coalition for Women's Wage Equity on Wednesday, September 21 at the University of Massachusetts Club. Around the table were representatives from the American Association of University Women, Boston Women's Commission, Boston Women's Network, Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy, The Crittenton Women's Union, Somerville Women's Commission, and YWCAs.

Senator Harriette Chandler, the lead sponsor with Representative Alice Wolf of a bill to be filed in January for the next legislative session, spoke to model legislation enacted in Minnesota in 1982. The State Government Pay Equity Act achieved a number of successes in the struggle for pay equity; the most important being that the law made "comparability of the value of the work" the primary consideration in state salary-setting. The Massachusetts legislation will be similarly crafted and will request an analysis of job classes and compensation of state employees as a first step in securing pay equity for women in Massachusetts.

The Coalition will support this legislation, which will advance Massachusetts' women to wage equality and will develop an integrated, collaborative statewide strategy. Organizations within the coalition will coordinate efforts in the areas of advocacy, research, public hearings, education and outreach.

Future Coalition members are expected to include Massachusetts NOW and Business and Professional Women. New members are welcome. To join or for more information about the MCSW work on pay equity or the Massachusetts Coalition for Women's Wage Equality, please contact Jill Ashton, Outreach Coordinator at (617) 626-6525.

"Ovarian cancer whispers.....please listen."

SEPTEMBER is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month
For more information visit: www.ovariancancerawareness.org/

MassGAP Kickoff a Huge Success

Nearly 100 enthusiastic and committed women attended the formal kickoff of the Massachusetts Governor's Appointment Project (MassGAP 2006) this week. MassGAP 2006 is a bi-partisan coalition of women's groups, including the MCSW, whose purpose is to increase the number of women appointed by the 2006-2010 sitting governor to senior cabinet-level positions, agency heads, and selected authorities and commissions in the Commonwealth.

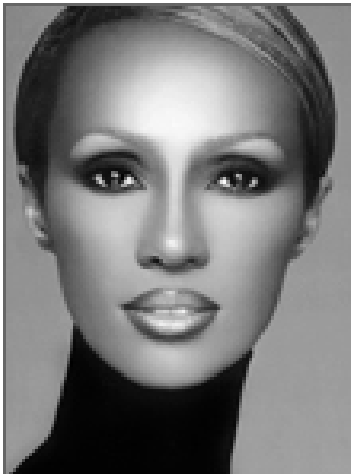
All gubernatorial candidates have committed to working with MassGAP if elected to ensure that the number of women appointed to high-level state government positions better reflects the percentage of women in the Commonwealth.

When MassGAP was created in 2002, women held approximately 30 percent of the highest-level appointed positions in the Commonwealth, even though they compose 52 percent of the population. MassGAP was created to fill this void, and it worked closely with Governor Mitt Romney's administration to improve the numbers. As a result, between January 2002 and July 2004, 42 percent of the new appointments made by Mr. Romney were women. The governor and others credited MassGAP with this achievement.

"While our 2002 efforts resulted in Massachusetts ranking first in the nation in the percentage of women holding top state positions, there is still work to be done," said Liz Levin, chair of MassGAP 2006. "By increasing the number of women in these top positions, we can affect the priorities of government and provide more opportunities for women in all sectors. We will deliver a highly qualified pool of candidates to the new governor as we work to elevate the role of women in state government and, ultimately, eliminate women's under-representation in important policy matters."

MassGAP will begin accepting resumes on Wednesday, November 8, and will deliver a vetted book of applications from highly qualified candidates to the new administration. Further information is available at www.massgap.org.

Have You Registered Yet? Second Keynote Speaker Added...IMAN



Iman, known to challenge the prevailing notions of beauty, became the first black international supermodel from Northeast Africa to revolutionize the look of American fashion. She is the Founder and CEO of IMAN Cosmetics and author of bestselling books *I AM IMAN* and *THE BEAUTY OF COLOR: The Ultimate Beauty Guide for Skin of Color*.

Save the Date!

**Wednesday, December 6, 2006,
The 2nd Annual Massachusetts Conference
for Women**

The MCSW is pleased to once again be the lead partner on the second annual MA Conference for Women, to be held at the Boston Exhibition and Convention Center. This one-day event will feature more than 75 diverse and nationally recognized speakers leading seminars on topics such as health, personal finance, education, and more. Conference attendees, expected to outnumber 5,000 this year, will enjoy even more networking, education and inspiration.

**Online registration is now available
at www.maconferenceforwomen.org**

Other Noteworthy News

Women Veterans' Network Honoring Outstanding Women Veterans

The contributions of Massachusetts' women in the military will be honored this Veterans' Day week at the "Women are Veterans Too" ceremony, which will be held on Wednesday, November 8th at 10:30 a.m. in the State House's Nurses Hall. This second annual event will feature presentations by women veterans and their supporters, as well as special recognition of an outstanding woman veteran.

For more information, please visit www.mass.gov/veterans, www.mass.gov/women/calendar/upcoming.htm or call the Women Veterans' Network at (617) 210-5781.

Brookline Commission for Women Host Forum on the Status of Women in Brookline

Local experts will conduct a discussion on the status of women in Brookline politics, health, public safety, business and economics on Thursday, October 12, 2006 at the Brookline Main Library, Hunneman Hall.

6:30 pm - Registration and Networking / 7:00 - 9:00 pm - Panel Discussion and Q & A

Panelists include, Marge Amster, Brookline Economic Development; Donna Kalikow, Former Chair, Brookline Board of Selectmen; Lynne Karsten, Brookline Department of Public Health; Chief Daniel C. O'Leary, Brookline Police Department; Molly Paul, Brookline Community Foundation; and serving as Moderator, Lee Cooke Childs, League of Women Voters.

All are invited to attend. For more information, please e-mail the Brookline Commission for Women at bcw@town.brookline.ma.us or contact the event coordinator, Merry Arnold at (617) 277-4800.

Domestic Violence Advocates Wanted for Research Interview

Advocates are being asked to participate in a study about domestic violence and their thoughts and feelings about the work they do. This involves participating in an audio taped interview which will be kept confidential. The interview should take between a half hour and an hour to complete.

The purpose of the research is to find out what advocates think about domestic violence in general and more specifically to investigate what it is that advocates think promotes and inhibits good relationships with clients. This project would not require a large time commitment on the part of any agency or program and interviews would be conducted at the convenience of the advocate.

Please contact Michelle Ronayne, MA at meronayn@suffolk.edu if you are interested in participating. Michelle is completing her PhD in the Psychology department and is conducting this as an independent research project in conjunction with Dr. Debra Harkins.

This project has received University IRB approval. Additionally, she teaches courses in the Sociology Department, including a course on domestic violence.

Free Financial Planning Day: Oct. 4 at the MA State House Great Hall

Hosted by the Financial Planning Association of Massachusetts and the State Treasurer's Office. You are invited to meet with a Certified Financial Planner professional at no cost or obligation as a public service during National Financial Planning week.

If you are not interested in an individual session, you will find tables full of interesting information. You can also grab a free lunch and listen to a speaker at noon who will provide a broad overview of financial planning issues.

For more information, please visit www.fpama.org.

MCSW E-MAIL ACTION ALERTS

Would you like to be notified of
MCSW's upcoming events, Calls to Action or Other News?
If so, join our e-Action Alert by
sending an e-mail to: join-mcsw-action-alert@listserv.state.ma.us

Upcoming Noteworthy Events & Happenings

October 12, 2006 → MCSW Launches its Massachusetts Women's Resource & Referral Network
(An online Web site) To be held at the MA State House - Grand Staircase - 11:00 am

October 16, 2006 → 10th Annual Conference on Women's Health & the Environment
For more information visit: www.reginavilla.com/heinz2006.html

October 18, 2006 → Last Day to Register to Vote and/or Change Your Party Enrollment Preference

October 19, 2006 → MA Women's Commission Meeting @ Worcester YWCA, 4:00 - 7:00 pm

October 23, 2006 → MCSW Pay Equity Coalition Meeting, Hurley Bldg., Boston, MA 3:30 - 5:30 pm

November 1, 2006 → MCSW Franklin-Hampshire Regional Council, Northampton YWCA 1:00 - 3:00

November 8, 2006 → 2nd Annual Women are Veterans Too! Event @ the MA State House, Nurses Hall

November 15, 2006 → MCSW Public Hearing, Worcester YWCA, 5:30 - 7:00

November 29, 2006 → MCSW Launch of the Status of Women & Girls, State House, Boston 10:30 - 11:30 am

December 6, 2006 → Massachusetts Conference for Women (Registration is now open!)

For more information visit: www.maconferenceforwomen.org

For a complete listing of events please visit www.mass.gov/women/upcoming.htm



Commission Officers & Members

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Greer Tan Swiston, Treasurer, Newton

If you have an event that you would like added to our future newsletters, or Web site, please e-mail the information to:
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WE'RE ON THE WEB!

VISIT US AT:

WWW.MASS.GOV/WOMEN

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